

## Translation and Conflict: Two Narratives of the Same Coin

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper sheds some light on the Palestinian narrative dated from the Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948, and the birth of the case of the Palestinian refugees driven out from Palestine. Israel has initiated a counter-narrative to that of Palestine. The paper conflates two different notions: the analysis of the narratives that have a bearing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the issue of translation as it affects our understanding of this conflict. The paper shows that the narrative has become important for Palestinian refugees, as it is reminiscent of Nakba ‘the catastrophe’ which has afflicted them since then and the Israelis as it has been a metaphor for the long-awaited Jewish state. The paper explores possible avenues for translators to take a greater part as participants in the construction of social and political reality when dealing with contesting narratives.*

*Keywords: Palestinian/Israeli narratives; Nakba; narrative theory; Palestinian-Israeli conflict; translation*

### INTRODUCTION

As a point of departure, it would be necessary to elucidate some theoretical points concerning Translation Studies (TS) and Narrative Theory (NT) in which the former comes to the fore to explain an array of translational phenomena, and is deemed as an interdisciplinary field of study. That is to say, it establishes relationships with other fields of knowledge such as sociology, linguistics, semiotics, cultural studies, philosophy, social sciences, NT, and so forth. The latter, however, has come to the foreground in recent years and is likely to mark the beginning of a major epoch of TS. Narratives are defined as “the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live, and it is our belief in these stories that guide our actions in the real world” (Baker 2007, p. 151). “Everything we know is the result of numerous crosscutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves” (Somers & Gibson 1994, p. 41; see also Baker 2006). Labov (as cited in Baker 2006, p. 23) argues that narrative is “one method of recapitulating the past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which [...] actually occurred.” The Palestinian/Israeli narrative is a case in point.

Likewise, NT is eclectic in nature as it may involve politics, sociology, linguistics, translation and other areas of knowledge. For example, in literary studies and linguistics, narrative is treated as “an optional mode of communication, often contrasting it with argumentation or exposition” (Baker 2006, p. 23). However, in politics as Whooley (2006, p. 296) points out, narrative aims to “serve as sites for political conflict and resistance, as competing voices struggle to dictate the meaning of the narrative.” Thus, “[i]n the context of the Middle East, for example, both Palestinians and Israelis appeal to a different set of statistical/census data ‘to garner legitimacy for the respective claims’” (Zuriek, as cited in Baker 2006, p. 25).

In so far as translation is concerned, Baker (2007, pp. 151-2) defends NT approach as crucial to TS on account of the “general dissatisfaction with existing theoretical notions.” She further says:

Norm theory encourages analysts to focus on repeated, abstract, systematic behaviour, and in so doing privileges strong patterns of socialisation into that behaviour and tends to gloss over the numerous individual and group attempts at undermining dominant patterns and prevailing political and social dogma. Similarly, norm theory has nothing to say on the intricate patterns of interplay between repeated, stable patterns of behaviour and the continuous attempts at subverting that behaviour [...]. Norm theory arguably also pays little attention to the political and social conditions that give rise to such patterns of dominance and resistance to them (Baker 2007, pp. 151-2).

It follows then that adopting NT approach may be conducive to researching the tumultuous changes or events in many countries as is the case in the Middle East. According to NT, translators are seen as decisive participants in constructing social and political reality (Baker 2005). Translators are located “at the heart of interaction, in the narratives that shape their own lives as well as the lives of those for whom and between whom they translate and interpret” (Baker 2005, p. 12). To Baker, “what we need is a framework that recogni[s]es the varied, shifting and ongoingly negotiable positioning of individual translators in relation to their texts, authors, societies and dominant ideologies” (2007, p. 153). In the same vein, Pym (1992, p. 171) highlights the role translators can play in the course translation saying:

I do not believe translators should passively accept the role of mere technicians, working on means and never considering anything but most immediate or commercial ends, burying themselves in a practice falsely cut off from history and theory. Translators should also be intellectuals; they should have ideas about who they are and what they hope to achieve as collectively.

In this, Pym stresses that high self-esteem is important for translation profession. ‘Parroting’ the original is unthinkable. Similarly, Bruner (1991, pp. 5-6) speaks of the importance of “how narrative operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality” rather than how it “as text is constructed.”

#### PALESTINIAN NARRATIVE

Palestinian narrative is characterised with the reproduction of the most grotesquely tragic stories of loss and dispossession in what has been later called *Nakba* (‘the catastrophe’), pointing to the Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948, and the establishment of the State of Israel. A disparity between Palestinian and Israeli narratives has been noticeable since then. The date has been deemed as unbearable poignancy for Palestinians as they lost their homeland, but a happy occasion for the Israelis as they establish their long-awaited state. It “represents a ‘master’ narrative that dominates the discourse in Palestinian society” (Hammack 2010, p. 507). In the context of Palestinian personal narratives whereby the subjects of the present study expressed their feelings and attitudes towards the *Nakba*, we can make the following points about their narratives. First, Israel has been responsible for great sadness and extreme anger of the Palestinians’ “unjust usurpation of land, dignity, and freedom” (Hammack 2010, p. 508). Second, the 1948 Israeli occupation of Palestine has left an indelible impression on Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims, and caused one of the most long-standing conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians. Third, the issue of refugees has

been the core of that conflict as more than half a million Palestinians were banished from Palestine, and many others had lost their kith and kin. Finally, it was an eerie and macabre feeling that the ‘Sword of Damocles’ has always been hanging over the Palestinians’ heads. ‘Why was that happening to Palestinians?’ is a question that seems to be unanswerable at the first glance, but, having indulged a bit into historiography, we come up with potential causes for the Palestinian sufferings— ideological, political etc. Geo-politics has failed to find a solution to the Palestinian cause, but succeeded in working out solutions to even more complicated issues elsewhere. It seems plausible to say that the Jews Holocaust is reminiscent of the Palestinian *Nakba*.

Although the Palestinian narrative has “continually been under erasure and attack” Abraham (2005, p. 21), it survives as story-within-a-story, handed down from generation to generation to help remind future Palestinian generations of the after-effects of the *Nakba* and, most importantly, to inculcate in their minds ‘the right of return’ to the motherland. For Palestinians, narrative then tends to be the conclusive prerogative which may alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians in a world that continues to give them the cold-shoulder to date (see also Yusof et al. 2012, p. 102). The narrative is based on the fact that “Israel expelled the Palestinians and bears responsibility for their becoming refugees” (Lynfield 2001, p. 1) and the demand for the right of return as Lynfield (2001, p. 1) further explains: “The Palestinians demand that 3 million refugees located in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and elsewhere be accorded the “right of return” to former locales in what became Israel. Israeli leaders see this as a blueprint for destroying Israel as a Jewish state.” Ideologically-motivated, Palestinian narrative sees the decline of Israel is eventually a function of deterministic forces, of which is the power of narrative that helps construct reality regardless of being ‘utopian’ as for Palestinians or ‘authentic’ as for Israelis.

#### ISRAELI NARRATIVE

Whilst the Palestinian narrative stresses that Palestinians are the aboriginals displaced and then replaced by Israelis, the Israeli narrative maintains that Palestine is a ‘land without people for people without land’ and a ‘Promised Land’ given to the Jews as “a contract between God and his own ‘chosen people’” (Abdel Jawad 2006, p. 72) thus pursuing the love of power to establish a state.

Pappe (1999, p. 9) argues that the “stronger party has the power to write the history in a more effective way.” “The Palestinians had to be eliminated whether through massacres or dispossession” (Eid 2008, p. 125). Pappe (1999, p. 9; italics in original) further adds that “Israel, the powerful party, is a state whose apparatus has been employed successfully to propagate its *narrative* in front of external public [whereas] the weaker party, the Palestinians, is engaged in a national liberation struggle.” It follows, then, that the Israeli narrative is a far cry from that of Palestinians’ due to absence of balance of power between Israel and the Palestinians, and that the Palestinian *Nakba* is nothing short of independence for Israelis. Israeli narrative says that “the refugees fled from their homes of their own volition during a war launched by the Arab side to snuff out the Jewish state, [thus] Israel bears ‘no moral responsibility’ for the refugee problem” (Lynfield 2001, p. 1).

#### METHODOLOGY

The present paper touches on Palestinian and Israeli narratives. As for the former, we first study 75-minute video clips of ten Palestinian narratives recapitulating past actions of what happened to them in the aftermath of the Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948. Their tellings include bruising experiences of being forcibly separated from family and the

motherland. Suffered a total dislocation of their lives, they have become refugees living in camps in the occupied Palestinian territories. Their narratives have been categorised into different types to facilitate our discussion. The author has translated into English all the selected narratives, opting for formal translation strategy as much as possible, so that ‘narrativity flavourings’ of the Source Language (SL) can be ensured. The Israeli narrative is then examined based on different available sources.

Both narratives have a portrayal of amity and/or enmity, which has dominated the discourses of Palestinians and Israelis since 1948. Arguably, amity or enmity of translation depends on the role of the translator— whereas the former is observed when participating in constructing social reality, the latter is caused when fuelling conflict (cf. Baker 2005). Baker stresses the importance of a translator’s intervention in the narratives circulated in a culture, editing out “culturally offensive narratives through non-translation” (Pym 2012, p. 59), a point which Pym argues against that “all translators have been called on to render messages with which they do not agree, for a great many noble and ignoble reasons” (Pym 2012, p. 59). A telling example is the translations into Arabic and Hebrew of the *Road Map* for peace, a plan to resolve the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict proposed by a ‘quartet’ of international entities: the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations. The principles of the plan were first outlined by U.S. President George W. Bush in a speech on June 24, 2002, in which he called for an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace. Both translations have much to tilt target audience, i.e., Palestinians and Israelis, towards peace solution settlement, but they are poles apart. The translation into Arabic falls short of the original, with a prominent ideology to promote the plan among Palestinians. However, the translation into Hebrew is a rip off of the original, reflecting animosity and antagonism displayed towards the Palestinians in dominant constructions of hegemony exerted by the USA and Israel. Obviously, the translator’s intervention for ‘noble and ignoble reasons’ has been to no avail ten years after the plan.

It is crystal-clear that when the translator takes a neutral position, that is, not embedded in either culture of language pairs, an interplay between the Palestinian and Israeli narrative is rather impossible, hence no political breakthrough on the horizon. In the words of Tymoczko (2003, p. 199), when “the place of enunciation of the translator is a space outside both the source and the receptor culture, the translator becomes a figure like romantic poets, alienated from allegiances to any culture, isolated by genius.” However, when the translator is located in ‘spaces between’ narratives, it is then feasible to assume him/her as a peace-giving facilitator of intercultural communication (cf. Pym 2012, p. 59).

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 61) speak of four dimensions of narratives (see also Baker 2006). First, ontological narratives “can only exist interpersonally in the course of social and structural interactions over time”, and that ‘we know who we are’ is a precondition for knowing what to do (Somers & Gibson 1994, p. 61). Secondly, public narratives are those stories elaborated and circulated among social and institutional milieus. Thirdly, conceptual narratives refer to “concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers”, and that the “conceptual challenge that narrativity poses is to develop a social analytic vocabulary that can accommodate the contention that social life, social organisations, social action, and social identities are narratively, that is, temporally and relationally constructed through both ontological and public narratives” (Somers & Gibson 1994, p. 61). Finally, ‘meta narratives’ are “our sociological theories and concepts [...] encoded with aspects of these master-narratives— Progress, Decadence, Industrialisation, Enlightenment, etc” (Somers & Gibson

1994, p. 61). We can further speak of other types which revolve around those proposed by Somers and Gibson (Somers & Gibson 1994, p. 61).

According to (Baker 2007, p. 155), narratives are formed by means of four interdependent features (see also Somers & Gibson 1994): (1) ‘temporality’ in which narratives become part and parcel of time and space and accrue their meanings from the temporal and spatial dimension of the narration *per se*; (2) ‘relationality’ whereby narratives are made up of a number of events whose meanings cannot be formed from a mere knowledge of those individual events; (3) ‘selective appropriation’ in which the construction of narratives is based on evaluative criteria; and (4) ‘causal emplotment’ which, according to Somers (1997, p. 82), “gives significance to independent instances, and overrides their chronological or categorical order.”

#### TYPOLOGIES OF NARRATIVES

The four dimensions of narrativity proposed above may further include other types of narratives, all of which operate within these dimensions. It should be noted that these types may overlap and are also part and parcel of the *Nakba*, i.e., ‘meta narrative’; for example, the ‘ontological’ narrative of the experience of loss and dispossession in the following section interplays with the ‘conceptual’ narrative of resistance to occupation. The proposed types of narratives seem to be typical of Palestinian narrative and are considered concomitant with and/or reminiscent of the narrative of the *Nakba*.

#### NARRATIVES OF PEASANT LIFE

This kind of narrative includes various aspects of a farmer’s life, e.g., vegetables, fruits, livestock, etc. In (1) below a Palestinian septuagenarian peasant farmer, recapitulating the past, is telling how his family members eked out an existence by working in the fields until the Israeli military occupation of Palestine came into being at the expense of downtrodden peasants. Although the work in the fields would have got the farmers down, the peasant life was nothing short of a nirvana turned by the occupation into a hellish nightmare insofar as they are concerned. Moreover, the speaker was recalling his life as a farmer before the reverberations of the *Nakba*.

(1)

We used to grow peanut, watermelon, wheat, barley... Erm, we also used to keep livestock such as cattle, sheep, cows and camels; that’s it! Well, the people in my village eke a living of labouring in the fields planting and harvesting crops, and they also kept livestock (author’s translation).

As can be noted in (1), the Palestinian narrative extols the peasant life and greatly esteems the land. Variety of fruits and vegetables were plentiful in his village, and were unmatched elsewhere, not only because they are fruits, but they also have connotations very much related to Palestine, hence the difference from other fruits elsewhere. Swedenburg (as cited in Abdel Jawad 2006, p. 77) argues that “Palestinian peasantry with its ties to the land has become a national signifier.” In this regard, the Palestinian poet Abu Salma (cited in Jayyusi 1992, p. 97) says: “No more do birds flutter among the high pines, or stars gaze vigilantly over Mt. Carmel. The little orchards weep for us, gardens grow desolate, the vines are forever saddened.” Whist fruits are only kinds of food all over the world eaten to provide fibres, vitamins, among other things; they are symbolically important nostalgic reminiscence of Palestine before occupation as to the Palestinians. Moreover, the speaker is forlorn. To him, peasantry stands on the brink of disappearance, if not already vanished. The *Nakba* goes too deep in the Palestinian memory and has left unbearable pain. The Palestinians feel too

miserable and lethargic to live out side their motherland. By means of ‘temporality’, the narrative made by the speaker derives much of its meaning from the “temporal moment and physical site of the narration” (Baker 2007, p. 155), i.e., ‘my village’, ‘the fields’ and 1948.

#### NARRATIVES OF THREATENING

The threat of war and annihilation of Palestinians was present in the memories of the Palestinian refugees. In (2) below, the speaker felt gnawingly unsatisfied with the apogee of Israeli success. The speaker was under threat of killing and hence felt that he should have been on guard. The Arab Salvation Armies were the speaker’s salvation but they did not go to his rescue.

(2)

The squabbles began in Jaffa when the Jewish marauding gangs raided the city with jeeps and indiscriminately opened fire at the people, and a bank was exploded. People were sick of these actions. Lude was occupied by the Jews as well. These actions went through the coast to different areas. Then the Jews occupied my village, situated only 25 kilometres from the sea (author’s translation).

In (2) above, this narrative, among many others, refutes the Israeli claims that Palestinian refugees had left their homeland voluntarily. It stresses the fact that the indiscriminate destructiveness and cold-blooded killings by ‘Jewish marauding gangs’ frightens the life out of Palestinian aboriginals. To better understand the above narrative, it is important for us to see the relation of this narrative to other previous sequence of events, that is to say, ‘relationality’. However, the Israeli narrative goes far beyond that of Palestinians’ as shown in (3) below:

(3)

Arab armies invaded Israel and battles raged in almost every city and settlement, there were instances in which Israeli troops forced the local Arab population to leave their homes. These were acts of self-defence in a war that killed six thousand of the six hundred thousand Jews then in the country, and it is clear that Israel did not, as alleged, mastermind a large-scale expulsion of Palestinians. According to their own testimonies, most of the Palestinians left because of the threats and fear-mongering of Arab leaders (Beker 2005, Denial of history and justice).

‘Selective appropriation’ by Israeli narrative is obvious here in which it steers us towards a particular course of action— the expulsion of ‘local Arab population’ was an act of ‘self-defence’ and that it resulted from ‘fear-mongering’ of Arab leaders rather than Israelis. By the same token, Dershowitz (2003, p. 74) says: “Israel defended itself against a genocidal war of extermination.”

#### NARRATIVES OF RESISTANCE TO THE OCCUPATION

The establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine in 1948 has been combustible fuse igniting the Arab-Israeli conflict and has increasingly focused Palestinians’ ire on Israel ever since. The resistance highlighted in (4) below is that the Jewish gangs used to cause troubles even to the British who were dragged willy-nilly into eyeball to eyeball confrontations as illustrated in (4) below:

(4)

-Did you resist the Jews?  
-No, the British and Duruz only resisted.

-I can't understand.  
-The British and Duruz resisted.  
We were accused of being rebels.  
The British used to shoot at the Jews (author's translation).

Virtually, the Palestinians were between two fires: the British and Jews on the one hand, and the Arab Salvation Armies on the other. The British parochialism killed the idea of staying in Palestine stone-dead, the Jews were brutish and coarse and the Arab Salvation Armies were weak-kneed. Therefore, the only way out for Palestinians was to develop “what has been termed a ‘culture of resistance’” (Hammer 2005, p. 36) which has been a fact of life for most Palestinians to date. Counter-resistance was justifiable as shown in (5) below:

(5)  
Riots and massacres also occurred in Aden, which was in British-controlled Yemen. In three days of disturbances in December 1947, many Jews were killed and the Jewish quarter was burned to the ground, so that the community lost its business and economic base. Altogether in those three days, 82 Jews were killed, 106 shops looted out of 170, 220 houses destroyed, and four synagogues gutted (Beker 2005, Expulsion as the goal).

‘Causal emplotment’ can be observed in (5) above. “It allows us to turn a set of propositions into an intelligible (sic) sequence about which we can form an opinion, and thus charges the events depicted with moral and ethical significance” (Baker 2007, p. 155). In a sense, the Israeli narrative implies that killing the Jews in such away requires establishing a state that would protect its citizens not only from Palestinians but also from Arabs. It imputes blame to the British for potential deliberate negligence. It also aims to override that of Palestinian’s as (5) above shows in terms of ‘chronological’ and ‘categorical order’. Chronologically, massacres committed against Palestinians were long time before those perpetrated against the Jews in Aden. Categorically, the massacres in Palestinian territories have laid bare the moral bankruptcy of the Jewish gangs.

#### NARRATIVES OF EXISTENTIAL INSECURITY

One reason for Palestinian exodus was *Sharaf al-bint* (the honour of girl). Slyomovics (1998, p. 101) mentions this meta- narrative: “the first thing we left our village was ‘ird (honour), only ‘ird, not money, not children, just sharaf, because we heard about Dayr Yasin”. In this regard, Thawabteh (2007, p. 20) explains: “It is ‘ird (synonymous with honour) per se which is culturally relevant to some patriarchal societies such as Arab and Islamic societies, among others. As a micro-sign, ‘ird is the bread-and-butter matter to almost all Arab and Islamic societies indeed.”

In (6) below, the speaker talks about the times prior to Dayr Yasin massacre, implying for premeditated killing “carried out for tactical reasons” (Gelvin 2005, p. 137).

(6)  
My father told me a lot about Dayr Yasin, May Allah have mercy on his soul. He told me that the armed Jews had begun the battle of Dayr Yasin. The Jews used to have arms use training at nights and, in the day, they worked as usual. They never thought of having a Jewish state. In fact, they attacked other Palestinian villages and towns, but not Dayr Yasin. However, due to the strategic position of Dayr Yasin in the middle of Jerusalem, the Jews always wanted to seize it. For example, they tried to purchase Palestinian lands, but the Palestinians absolutely refused. Therefore, they bombed the school and killed 125 students, entered the village and began to kill old people. They stabbed pregnant women, and killed many people, around 225. In the end, they occupied Dayr Yasin (author's translation).

Obviously, the Palestinian narrative in (6) stresses the fact that the Jews had the upper hand as they were equipped with weaponry whereas the Palestinians were armless. It also states that purchasing Palestinian lands was highly demanded. In addition, the image of bombed-out school building surrounded by rubble is highlighted in (6) above. Nevertheless, “[w]hat is now rubble to the world was once a place called home for another” (Yusof 2012, p. 102). It finally outlines the atrocities and brutalities by Jews, clearly seen in indiscriminately massacring the defenceless population in Dayr Yasin.

In contrast, Israeli narrative has described these stories as ‘cock-and-bull stories’, and highlighted the brutality of the Arabs and the ‘Palestinian terrorists’. As soon as Israel declared its independence, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon attacked it, with the help of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Libya. Arab armies and Palestinian territories determined to destroy the new Jewish state and exterminate its population (Dershowitz 2003, p. 75). This narrative tries to instil in the minds of the World how Arab countries decided to wipe the newly-born state out of the map.

Nevertheless, Dayr Yasin has been notorious for chewing Palestinians up, and brought about such excruciatingly painful memories which travelled in a split-second to other parts of Palestine. Consider (7) below,

(7)

In fact, people fled their houses because of the terrorism of the marauding gangs of the armed Jews who used to kill all people, children, youths, men, women and old men and women. Dayr Yasin was just a case in point. The gangs killed youths, women and even pregnant women. They stabbed them in the abdomen. It happened that a woman who was expecting a baby was stabbed in her abdomen, just for fun. You know most Palestinians are conservative and for this reason they fled in fear of killing (author’s translation).

That children, men and women are horribly murdered in Dayr Yasin falls within the scope of ontological and public narratives. The former is shown by the fact that the speaker vividly remembers minute details of the massacre in Dayr Yasin (e.g., ‘a woman who was expecting a baby was stabbed in her abdomen’) whilst the latter can be observed via something like ‘Palestinians are conservative and for this reason’, for instance.

#### NARRATIVES OF CHILDREN

Given that the Israeli narrative about Palestinian refugees voluntarily leaving home is true, why then should appalling stories happen? Benvenisti et al. (2007, p. 99) state that: “Terrified and unable to think clearly, fathers and mothers forgot or were forced under fire to leave some of their children to save their other children”, hence “women who were so terrified [...] grabbed pillows [leaving] their children in the midst of forced evacuation” (Benvenisti et al. 2007, p. 99). Consider (8) and (9) below:

(8)

In Jenin, I was told that a displaced family leaving for Jenin discovered that they had brought along a cushion in a pram instead of the baby (author’s translation).

(9)

People had to leave their village because they searched for a safe haven from the brutal Jewish attacks. My parents forgot to bring along my little brother. Later, they came back and got him (author’s translation).



The speaker in (8) recalls memories of a bygone age, i.e., ontological narrative in which personal verbal sequence of clauses matches sequence of events (see Labov as cited in Baker 2006, p. 23). Similarly, the speaker tells a similar scare story in (9). In a counter-narrative, however, Dershowitz (2003, p. 74) states that the “Arabs would target soft civilian areas—cities, towns, kibbutzim, and moshavim—trying to kill as many children, women, elderly, and other unarmed civilians as possible.” Giving testimony, the then British police chief of Hebron says: “On hearing screams in a room, I went up a sort of tunnel passage and saw an Arab in the act of cutting off a child’s head with a sword. He had already hit him and was having another cut, but on seeing me, he tried to aim the stroke at me but missed” (Dershowitz 2003, p. 43).

#### NARRATIVES OF SKULDUGGERY

It is truism that the Zionist Movement has its political and religious agendas that pay no attention even to Jews’ blood, thus the killings of Jews by Jews for political reasons “from the pre state period in Palestine through more than four decades of Israeli regime” (Sharkansky 1996, p. 85). Consider (10) below,

(10)

There was a revolt against the British mandate 15 years before we were displaced. At a time, the Jews cuffed other Jews in the hands or feet for skulduggery. In other words, the Jews tried to fling accusations against Palestinians (author’s translation).

In (10) above, the Israeli meta-narrative is aimed at accusing Palestinians of wrongdoings so all retaliatory actions by the Jews become justifiable. Falling victim of political skulduggery of Zionist Movement, the Jews were killed. However inhumane this may sound, the Movement exert strenuous efforts to establish a Jewish state.

#### NARRATIVES OF THE BRITISH

Great Britain holds responsibility for all of the sufferings of Palestinians. In (11), the British had applied double standards in their treatment of the Jews and the Palestinians. Whilst supporting the Jews with weaponry, they did not give a damn about the Palestinians.

(11)

I think the British were responsible for the undue suffering of the Palestinians as they armed the Jews with machine guns and stuff like that. Palestinians were armless, the reason why Jews could have had the upper hand (author’s translation).

A combination of narratives is present in (11) above whereby the use of first person pronoun ‘I think’ is the epitome of ontological narrative. And the British being held responsible for the ‘suffering of the Palestinians’ is an example of public narrative. For more elaboration, take (12) below:

(12)

On November 29, 1947, a two-state Resolution calling for a Jewish state and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security was issued. The Jews encountered resistance by Arab revolts during British mandate. When the British troops were quite sure that the Jews had become powerful enough to establish their own state, they withdrew in April, 1948. The troops withdrew to Cyprus, and perhaps went back to Haifa at night. The Palestinians depended on 6 Arab countries. While the Palestinians were armless, the Jews had cache of

weapons left when the British troops withdrew. David Ben Gurion and Ben-Gurion also purchased ships of weaponry, and squabbled with each other on the Haifa port (author's translation).

The Palestinian narrative in (12) above describes the political British cunning. The British incessant support to Jews had given the Jewish state a new lease of life. This may fall within the ambit of conceptual narrative. In contrast, Israeli narrative compliments the British on the way they used to act against Arabs and Palestinians' attacks against the Jews. In (13), the British spared no effort to help the Jews, even decades before the establishment of the Jewish state, probably because of delicate political interests between the two countries.

(13)

The British condemned 'the atrocious acts committed by the bodies of ruthless and bloodthirsty evildoers.' They railed against the 'murders perpetrated upon defenceless members of the Jewish population ... accompanied, as in Hebron, by acts of unspeakable savagery' (Dershowitz 2003, p.43).

In (13) above conceptual narrative is employed. The vocabulary is meticulously selected by text producer, with a view to steering the readership towards an ideology similar to that of Israeli's.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR TRANSLATORS

The present paper is basically intended to pin down the various obstacles that may be involved in translating ideologically-motivated narrative of Palestinian refugees and Israelis. As Baker (2007, p. 155) argues, narratives "are stories that are temporally and causally constituted in such a way as to allow us to make moral decisions and act in the real world." To better understand narrative, and following Somers and Gibson (1994), four features should be taken into consideration. First, 'temporality' means that "narratives are embedded in time and space and derive much of their meaning from the temporal moment and physical site of the narration" (Baker 2007, p. 155). In Example (12) above, "On November 29, 1947" and "The troops withdrew to Cyprus" are features which are necessary for the making of the overall Palestinian and Israeli narratives. Secondly, 'relationality' is based on the fact that every single element in a narrative cannot be understood irrespective of "its place within the network of elements that make up the narrative" (Baker 2007, p. 155). For instance, "They stabbed them in the abdomen", as Example (7) above shows, can be made sense of if only it is taken within the context Dayr Yasin massacre when the armed Jews began to kill children, youths etc. Thirdly, 'appropriation' refers to "appropriation of a set of events or elements from the vast array of open-ended and overlapping events that constitute experience" (Baker 2007, p. 155), the narrative of Dershowitz (2003, p. 74) is a case in point. Finally, 'causal emplotment' depends on the assumption that an independent instance is given precedence to another. Example (8) above, 'bringing along a cushion in a pram instead of the baby' can be approached with counter-argument, i.e., 'The Arabs attempt to kill as many children, women, etc. as possible' (Dershowitz 2003, p. 43).

Palestinian narrative of the *Nakba* is presented in a form of translation. The author attempts to reproduce in TL, as faithfully as possible, all the linguistic as well as the cultural features of which the SL is composed. Cultural diversities are thought to be difficult to translate. In fact, there has been intense debate to which the translator should give priority. Should it be to the SL or to the target language? The approach we adopted was narrative theory which highlights narrative of Palestinians and Israelis who have been involved in a tug-of-war for 'Motherland' as to the former or 'Promised Land' as for the latter. The role of the translator should not be mere linguistic intermediary in the conflict between peoples, but as a participant in constructing social realities; therefore, the role she/he plays goes beyond

textual boundaries to a more deep understanding of the kind of political conflicts and cultural clashes between different nations. The translator mediating competing narratives in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict should see himself/herself as an active social participant, thus the feasibility to come up with the narrative of translation that would arguably promote amity in the long run. Failure to do this gives rise to enmity.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In an attempt at a better understanding of the Palestinian and Israeli narratives, the current paper has shown that narrative is of quotidian significance for translators, to which much attention should be paid. Both narratives underlie disparity and discrepancy, usually typical of areas with political upheaval. Amity of translation is likely to take place if, and only if, the translators “acknowledge the fact that they participate in very decisive ways in promoting and circulating narratives and discourses of various types” (Baker 2005, p. 4). Enmity of translation is also possible for translators “fuelling conflicts, subjugating entire populations and providing precisely the kind of bridging of language gaps that allow such atrocities to take place” (Baker 2005, p. 4). Insofar as the current paper is concerned, decision-making in the process of rendering both narratives is a matter of life and death, due to the nature of Arab-Israeli conflict.

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